

these individuals are going to be not asked to go out there and defend individuals that are charged with a misdemeanor or minor felonies, but they'll probably be requested for first degree murder cases. And I'm not sure that we're going to get the caliber of public defenders representing these individuals that we would probably have if we at least allowed the seasoned attorneys out in the small counties to represent those people. So I don't feel that you're going to get an adequate or as good a defense as we have under the current system. And for those two reasons, I'm going to be voting to not advance the bill. I would say that I understand Senator Kristensen's concern, and it's a concern of a number of people in some of the smaller counties that these type of expenses do...can create terrible financial havoc on the counties. But I don't feel that this will solve the problems that that concern would help to alleviate. Now if you want to take over the entire system, I think, yeah, that would solve those problems. And maybe that's something that the state should look to, to reduce property taxes. But a piecemeal approach I don't feel will solve that problem, so I'm going to be voting no. Thank you.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Abboud. Senator Witek, followed by Senators Vrtiska and Avery.

SENATOR WITEK: Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislature, Senator Abboud just asked a lot of the same questions that I have. I had thought this had been listed as one of the property tax relief measures. And I don't see any property tax relief in here. I see, first of all, how much of the half million dollars is going to go to the actual counties and how much is going to be set up in this committee and hiring staff and doing all this list of other things that people refuse to take out of the bill. And I'd like to see this just for death penalty cases. If you insist on passing something like this, I'd like to see at least an amendment saying it's just for death penalty cases. It makes a lot more sense to me to just set up a fund. And I do have an amendment that I'll probably be introducing on Select on this, if this bill goes forward, just to set up the fund and have county boards make some of these decisions on how much money will be spent for attorneys, or at least instructing if this is possible. We're kind of just talking about con...a little bit exactly what I want, but not setting up a committee structure like Senator Kristensen is doing in this. And, again, it absolutely floors me that people will pass these bills on without knowing what...I know the costs right now say have a